



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner



February 22, 2007

The Honorable Naida L. Kaen, Chairman
House Science, Technology, and Energy Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 304
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 467 relative to a climate change action plan

Dear Chairman Kaen and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) is pleased to support House Bill 467, which requires the Department of Environmental Services to develop a climate action plan and to report on global warming issues. DES staff have discussed potential amendments with the prime sponsor, Representative Jim Ryan, that would alternatively create a state climate change commission with the responsibility of establishing emissions reduction goals, adopting a state (as opposed to DES) climate plan and recommending legislation necessary to implement the plan. The Department believes such a process would provide, via public hearings on a draft plan and goals, the necessary venue for full stakeholder participation and development of a broader, more consensus-based statewide vision for addressing this critical issue.

Existing and predicted impacts from climate change have received increased attention recently due to the growing body of research documenting its importance. In particular, the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued in February 2007, declared that warming of the earth's climate system is "unequivocal" and that there is "very high confidence" that human activities are contributing significantly to this warming. Further, the Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment demonstrated existing impacts of climate change to New England and predicts future impacts of increased extreme storm events, less snowfall and higher summer peak temperatures. These impacts may have significant economic, environmental, and public health costs to the citizens of New Hampshire.

New Hampshire was an early leader in assessing the risks of climate change and in taking proactive steps to identify and implement strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. DES developed and published a Greenhouse Gas Inventory in October 1997 and a climate change report in December 2001 called The Climate Change Challenge – Actions New Hampshire Can Take to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2001 Report). Recent actions to address climate change include Governor Lynch's 25 x 25 campaign committing the State to increasing the amount of less carbon intensive renewable energy used to 25% of total use by 2025, proposed legislation for a New Hampshire renewable portfolio standard and the Governor's energy efficiency initiative in state government operations and buildings.

Since the 2001 Report, all of the New England states have developed action plans, and new modeling tools are available for quantifying emissions and predicting the greenhouse gas emission reductions from various measures. Governor Lynch has directed DES to update its climate change action plan in the context of recent initiatives and the growing urgency of the issue. DES has worked with the sponsors of this bill to

coordinate their interests and concerns with plans to update New Hampshire's plan and is supportive of the approach taken in the bill. However one area of concern is the goals New Hampshire commits to for greenhouse gas emission reductions.

The bill, as currently drafted, calls for setting New Hampshire goals for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions to those in the 2001 New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP) Climate Change Action Plan, namely:

Short-term Goal: Reduce regional GHG emissions to 1990 emissions by 2010.

Mid-term Goal: Reduce regional GHG emissions by at least 10% below 1990 emissions by 2020, and establish an iterative five-year process, commencing in 2005, to adjust the goals if necessary.

Long-term Goal: Reduce regional GHG emissions sufficiently to eliminate any dangerous threat to the climate; current science suggests this will require reductions of 75-85% below current levels.

The NEG/ECP goals were originally set as a regional target allowing state and provinces flexibility in how and what sectors they could best reduce their emissions. In this regard, New Hampshire took actions reducing power plant emissions and improving energy efficiency but made little progress in reducing emissions from cars and trucks. DES estimates that to meet the short-term NEG/ECP goal across all sectors, reductions of more than 30% from current emissions would be needed. DES recommends setting a more realistic initial target after analyzing the emissions reductions that can be achieved from specific measures. Relative to the long-term goal of reducing greenhouse emissions to 75-85% below 2001, this represents a significant reduction that could require major technological changes in transportation and energy production. DES will consult with the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers to establish a date for their long-term regional goal of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases by 75-85% below 2001.

DES looks forward to continuing to work with the sponsors and supporters of this bill in updating New Hampshire's climate change action plan to address this very important issue. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Should you have further questions or need additional information please feel free to contact Robert R. Scott, Director, Air Resources Division (271-1088, rscott@des.state.nh.us) or Michael Fitzgerald, Administrator Technical Programs (271-6390, mfitzgerald@des.state.nh.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas S. Burack". A large, semi-transparent red "COPY" stamp is overlaid on the signature.

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: HB 467 sponsors